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Bi-Centennial Anniversary

OF THE

Friends' Meeting House

AT

MERION,

PENNSYLVANIA.



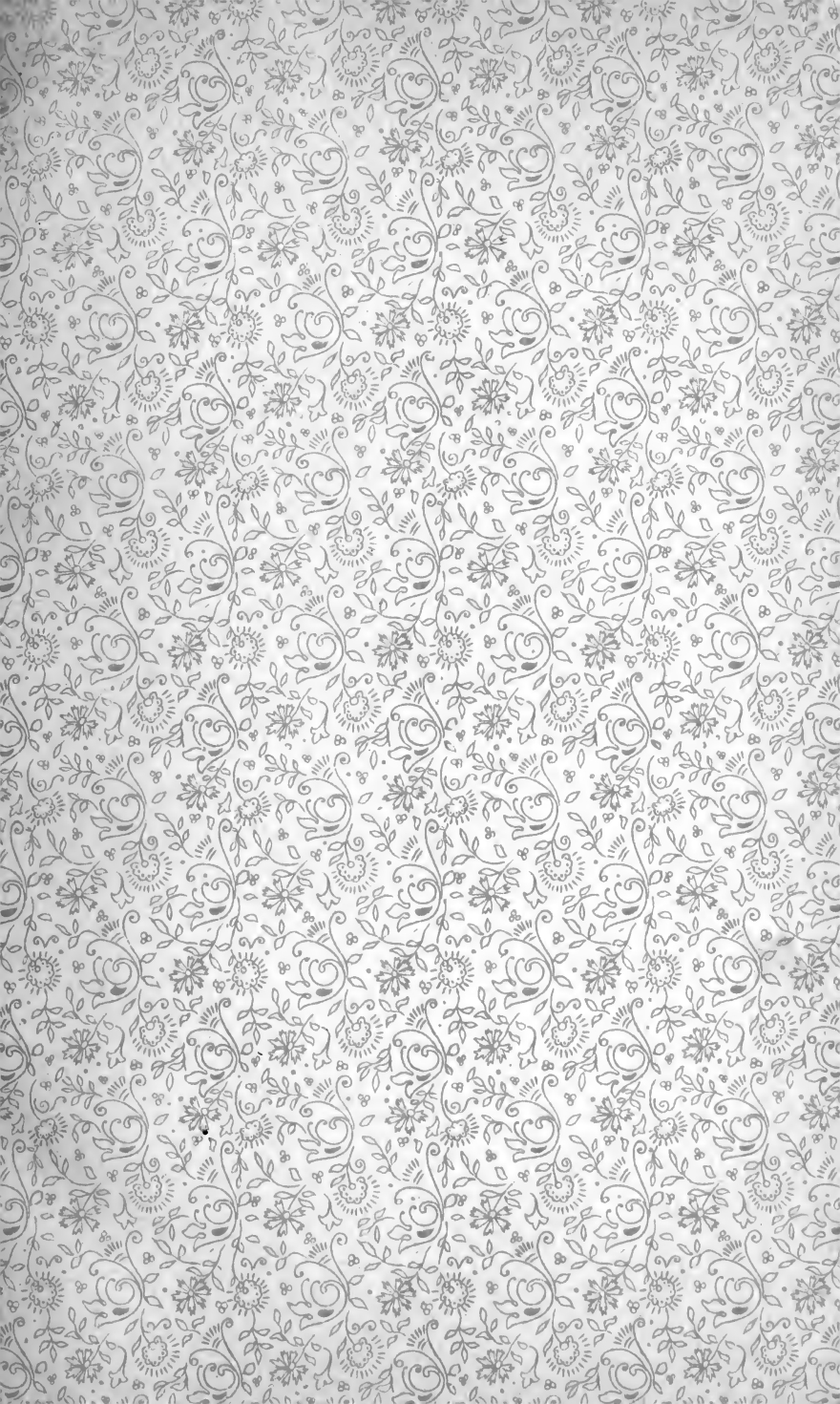
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WILLIAM I. HULL

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The Oak

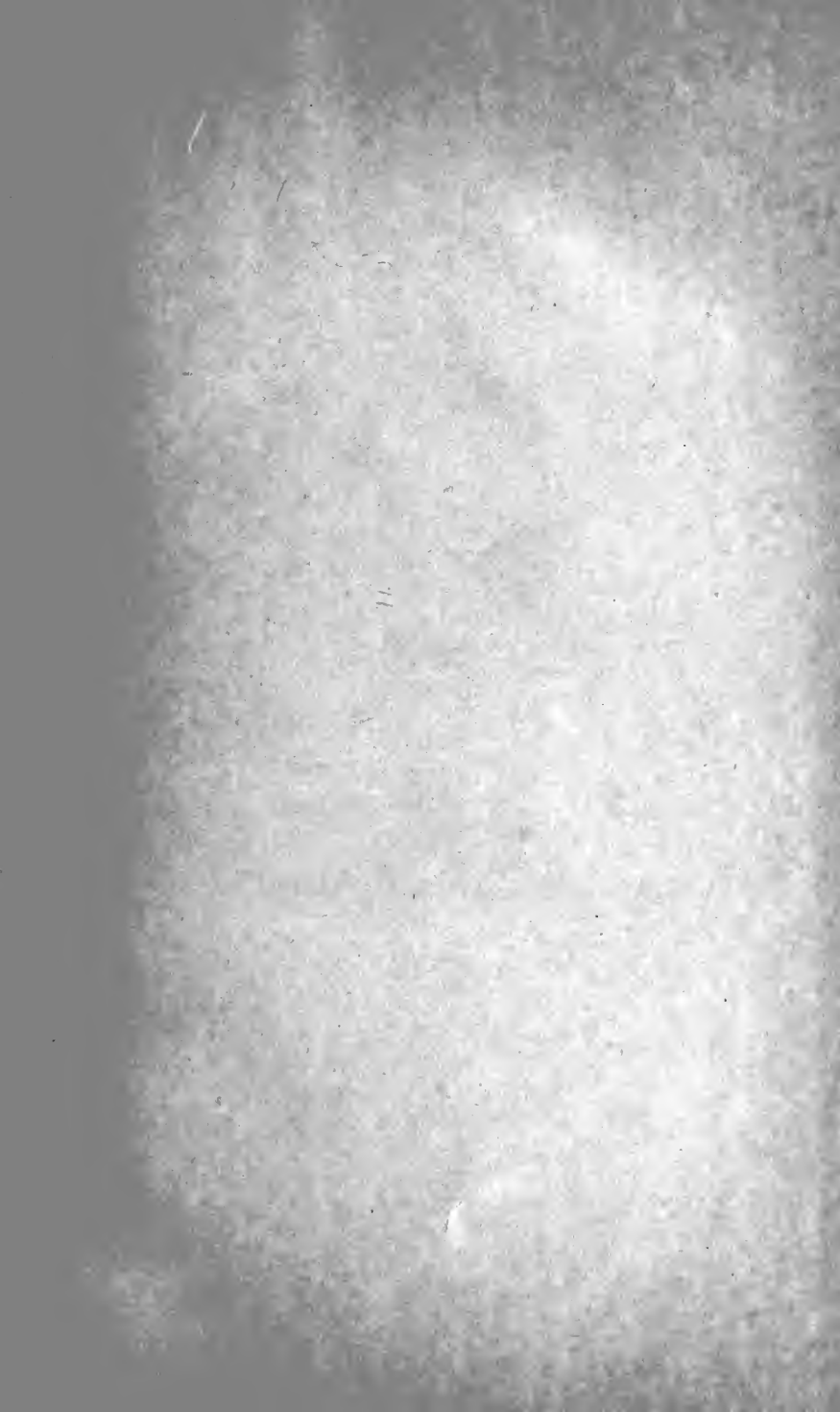
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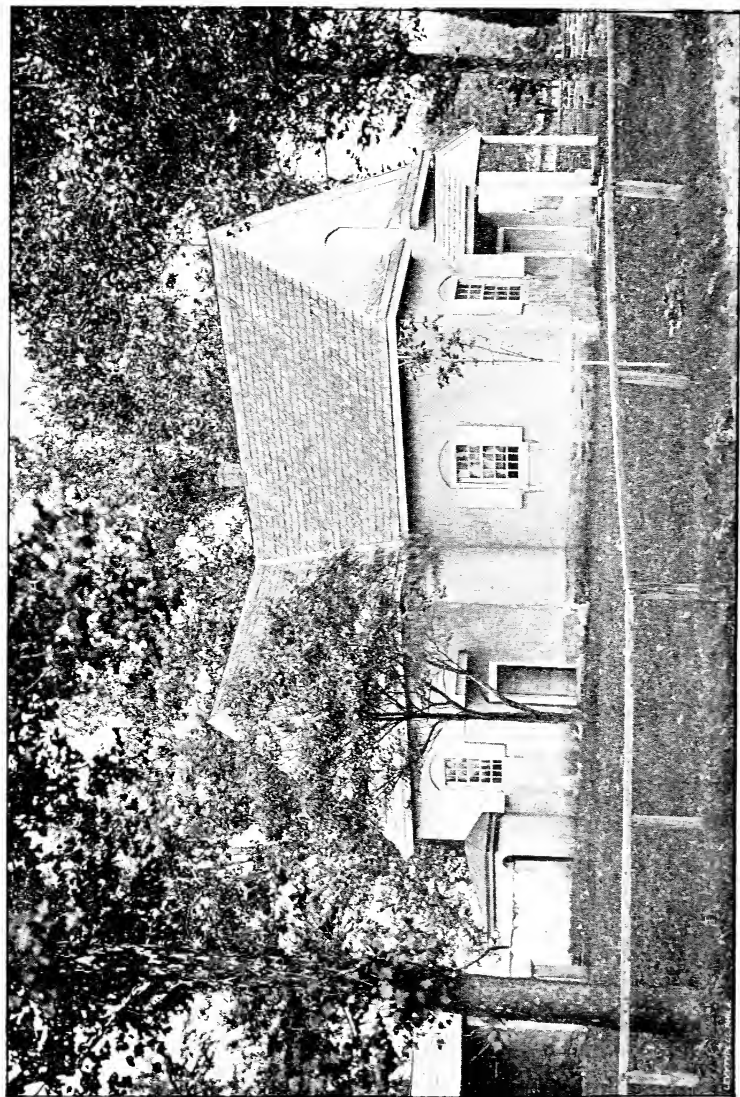












FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE AT MERION, PA.

*Merion, Pa Friends Meeting House.*

BI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE AT

MERION,

PENNSYLVANIA.

1695



1895

Philadelphia :  
FRIENDS' BOOK ASSOCIATION,  
FIFTEENTH AND RACE STREETS.  
1895.



BX 7780  
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## COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

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JOSEPH W. THOMAS, *Chairman.*

ELLEN D. RAMSAY,	JOSEPH M. TRUMAN, JR.,
SAMUEL H. HIBBERD,	ANNA F. LEVICK,
ELLA V. CONARD,	GEORGE W. HANCOCK,
MARY J. WALKER,	CATHARINE JONES,
BENEDICT LEEDOM,	EDMUND ALLEN,
RUTH T. ROBERTS,	LAURA ALLEN,
WILLIAM WEST,	WILLIAM FUSSELL,
JOHN LEEDOM,	DAVIS YOUNG,
ROBERT M. JANNEY.	

THE subject of holding memorial exercises at the Friends' Meeting House, at Merion, Pennsylvania, to commemorate its erection in 1695,—two hundred years ago,—was brought before Radnor Monthly Meeting of Friends, Fourth month 11th, 1895, wherein it was duly considered and approved. A committee was appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the occasion, with authority to add to their numbers. With the desire that both bodies of Friends should be represented in the work, an invitation was extended to members of the other branch, and the preparation of one of the papers and a poem assigned to them.

The celebration was held on Seventh-day, Tenth month 5th, 1895, which proved to be a beautiful autumn day, and was enjoyed by the many friends assembled. The people began to gather several hours before the time appointed for the exercises, to take advantage of the opportunity of inspecting the meeting-house and the many points of interest associated with the place. A large tent was erected upon the grounds to accommodate those attending the exercises. At the hour announced, 1.30 p.m., an audience of one thousand or more persons had met therein. Shortly after this hour, the Chairman, Robert M. Janney, called the meeting to order, and requested the observance of a period of silence, during which prayer was offered by Rufus M. Jones, which met with response in the hearts of those present.

The programme as arranged by the committee was soon after entered upon, being introduced by an address from the Chairman, which follows, with the other papers presented.



## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

ROBERT M. JANNEY, CHAIRMAN.

IF any authority were needed for such an observance as this among Friends, I think we have it in the injunction: "Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

In celebrating with simple yet sincere and appropriate ceremonies the two hundredth anniversary of the building of this meeting-house, we are desiring to honor the fathers and mothers who founded it, as also the long line of worthies who, through two centuries, here worshiped the Father in spirit and in truth; and in so honoring them I feel that we are honoring ourselves.

I trust that it is with no improper pride or spirit of self-laudation that we shall recount the past, nor with boastful confidence that we shall scan the future; but that, drawing inspiration from the one, we may resolve to dedicate ourselves with singleness of purpose to a high fulfilment of the other. Believing as we do in the beneficent influences of Quakerism upon the world, and that it has a message to the people of to-day, let us keep always before us the simplicity and sufficiency of the faith of our fathers,—“the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints,”—the faith which, if truly accepted, concerns itself not so much with naming the name, as with doing the will. For hath not the Master said: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,”

—and again : “ Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you.”

How much it means to be a Friend indeed !

Friends, it is a most pleasant privilege to welcome you on the very interesting occasion which to-day has drawn us as “ with one accord in one place,” a place so fragrant with hallowed memories and so rich in suggestive thought.

And there are many here who are not members of the Religious Society of Friends, but who gladly trace their descent from an honored ancestry which once worshiped here, and now sleeps in the quiet autumn sunlight on the hillside nearby. Especially to these, but most cordially to all, I bid welcome (using the word in its best significance) as Friends.



# FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE AT MERION, PENNSYLVANIA.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH.

BY MARY J. WALKER.

ALTHOUGH the first experience and the first settlements of Friends in America were not in Pennsylvania, yet in no other part of the New World is the interest of Friends and Friendly families so deeply seated. It is their own land and their own home. Pennsylvania was the child of the mother country, protected by the government and sharing the friendship of the throne.

Philadelphia is to-day the Quaker City, and though no peculiar religious sect now guards her interests, and the Friendly garb is fast disappearing from her streets, yet the influence exerted by the early Friends may still be traced in her institutions for the increase of useful knowledge and healthful pleasures, and in the upright character of her residents. It is surprising how many individuals, though members of a different church, and affiliated with interests opposed to the testimonies of Friends, eagerly claim a Friendly ancestry.

In the surrounding country where the old meeting-houses stood and still stand, though the worshipers in them are few, the Friendly stamp on the neighborhood is yet recognised and respected, and much regret is felt that the old-time simplicity is disappearing.

Although desiring settlers of means, of honest purpose, of education, settlers of his own faith, William Penn persuaded no man or woman to precede or follow him to his wilderness. To one and all he said: "In whomsoever a desire is to be concerned in this intended plantation, such should weigh the thing before the Lord, and not rashly conclude on any such remove, and that they do not offer violence to the tender love of their kindred and relations, but soberly and conscientiously

endeavor to obtain their good wills, the unity of Friends where they live, that whether they go or stay, it may be of good savor before the Lord, from whom alone can all Heavenly and earthly blessings come."

To Pennsylvania as early as 1682 came the little band of pioneers that founded this meeting.

In a paper on the "Early History of Merion," written by Dr. James J. Levick, we learn that 5,000 acres of land were purchased in 1682 of William Penn by John ap Thomas and Edward Jones for themselves, and fifteen other Welsh families. These people had been convinced of the truth of the Gospel as preached by George Fox and others of the early Friends, and were anxious to go where they might live as those testimonies taught, in peace. They were land-holders and office-holders in their native country, most of them having education, and a few being persons of marked ability. Their purchase was within the Welsh Tract, on the west bank of the Schuylkill, in what is now the counties of Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware, the western boundary line of West Chester being the western limit of the tract.

It was granted by William Penn as an especial home for his persecuted fellow-worshipers in that small mountainous part of English territory.

The love of home in these Welsh hearts was so great that before they consented to cross the seas, they had bargained with the Proprietary for a separate Barony of 40,000 acres, where they could attend to all their duties, both temporal and spiritual, in their own way and in their own language. In this manner they continued to live, aloof from all municipal control, conducting their affairs in "Gospel order" for some years, until the best interests of themselves and the surrounding country seemed to require them to relinquish their peculiar rights.

This relinquishment was only accomplished through a stern sense of duty, and was done, as Friends say, greatly in the cross. Griffeth Owen and other Friends made an earnest, dignified appeal to the authorities

against the attempt to deprive them of their privileges, clinging to their rights as descendants of the "Ancient Britons," and claiming that they had been promised in this country rights of law and language they had enjoyed under the crown of England. Their petition met with no favor. William Penn had returned to England to struggle for his rights and the welfare of his colony, his authority was slipping from his grasp, he could no longer protect his friends according to their desires, and the Welsh Tract was opened to strangers, though for many years there was little interference with their clannish feelings. Some of them afterwards held offices of trust under the government that had so used them, Griffeth Owen himself being for some time a member of the Governor's Council.

With fond hopes fixed on this far-off New Wales, the little company of seventeen families, "in all forty, set sail from Liverpool in the ship *Lyon*, John Compton, master, and arrived safely in the Schuylkill River the 13th day of ye Sixth month, called August, A. D. 1682."

A few days later Edward Jones took possession of his share of the purchase, and made the first Welsh home in Merion. His descendants still hold title to some of the original grant, though this was not, as has been claimed, the first British settlement made in Pennsylvania. We have the authority of Dr. Smith for saying that Robert Wade and his family from England settled at Upland (Chester) in 1676, and were the first members of the Society of Friends who located permanently within the limits of the Commonwealth.

The land occupied by these passengers on the *Lyon* included the ground on which was erected this house, (and it may be an earlier one), the building of which, two hundred years ago, we are here to-day to commemorate.

These families were the founders of Merion Meeting, and, as was the custom with the early Friends, until a house for special service was ready, the homes of the members were the meeting-places of the Society.

From Merionethshire in North Wales these early

settlers came, and like others who had broken ties in the old world to begin life again in the new, they gave the name of the beloved homeland they had left to what they hoped to make into a happier home for themselves and their children in this far-off wilderness. Merion, we are told, is so called from Merionethshire, a county of North Wales, named from a prince who lived and ruled there nearly a thousand years ago. From this rugged part of the old world, where are other names reproduced in this locality, came these serious, trusting people. Persecuted in their own country, they sought peace and freedom here, a blessing in which they were not disappointed, and which their descendants to this day enjoy.

We are here to day to recall the good and lasting work of our Welsh ancestors, for many of us link our kinship with these old names, and can read our own family names in the early records. It is a foolish pride that boasts merely of a long line of ancestry, but if a satisfactory thrill stirs our hearts at the recollection that our fathers and mothers through several generations have been hearers and proclaimers of good words, and practical examples of the religion they taught, and we are thus encouraged to press forward in a similar pathway, that we leave no stain on the family and the meeting record, then will this preservation of family and meeting history accomplish a good work for the future.

A difference of opinion exists as to the exact time of the building of this house, but it is said to have been for many years the only house of worship within the present county of Montgomery.

The property was held by the Society for some years by deeds in the form of lease and release, the first actual deed being given in 1745. In 1695 a lot containing half an acre was conveyed by Edward Reese to the trustees of Merion Preparative Meeting, for graveyard purposes. Joseph Tunis in 1763 donated a small strip of land adjoining, for the like use. In 1801 and 1804 John Dickinson conveyed to the trustees two

lots for the use of the members and for the grave-yard, adjoining the latter and extending from road to road. A dwelling-house for the caretaker of the meeting-house and grounds has since been erected thereon.

Joseph George, John George and Edward Price, all descendants of ancient settlers, have lately made liberal bequests for the future preservation and protection of the house and grounds.

When this building was erected there were no public highways near; communication between the homes and places of business and worship must have been according to the pleasure and accommodating spirit of the settlers. As early as 1678 a court at Chester had ordered that every person "as far as his land reaches" should make good and passable "wayes" from neighbor to neighbor. A survey for a road from Merion to Radnor was confirmed in 1713. We also hear of a road from Merion meeting to Darby passing by Haverford meeting-house. The old Conestoga or Lancaster road, now known as Montgomery Avenue through Merion and Radnor, and passing this house, was confirmed as far as the Brandywine in 1721, though near the city, probably from Merion to Philadelphia, it had been in use much earlier than this. It extended from Lancaster to the Schuylkill River at High Street ferry. Tradition says in the days of the red man it had been an Indian trail. When civilization took the place of Indian customs, the traveled way was widened to suit the traffic of the new possessors. In 1785 a road was made from Levering's ford on the Schuylkill, connecting with the old Lancaster road at the north-west corner of this property.

One of the highways from Philadelphia through this section was marked by mile-stones, a few of which still stand, having on the reverse side the coat of arms of the family of William Penn.

From the minutes kept by women Friends we have "eight shillings paid for cleaning Merion meeting-house, 12th of Twelfth month, 1695," and for several successive years there is a similar entry.

While it is true that the Monthly Meeting minutes say certain favors were granted in 1713\* for finishing Merion meeting-house, it is also true that as early as 1702 the minutes of the Preparative Meeting tell of finishing and furnishing Merion meeting-house, of providing hinges, locks, shutters and benches,—(they seemed desirous to “secure” the meeting-house),—and in 1703 Friends are requested to pay their subscription towards building the addition to the meeting-house.

“On the 19th of Third month, vulgarly called May, in the year 1693, in a solemn and public assembly in their [Friends’] public meeting-place at Merion” was solemnized a marriage. May not this “public meeting place” have been the temporary log structure, and the present building have been commenced in 1695, as the ancient stone in the gable testifies, and finally completed in 1713? That the most of the present building was erected in 1713 is evident from a paper recently found containing the names of subscribers and the amounts contributed in that year for building the meeting-house.

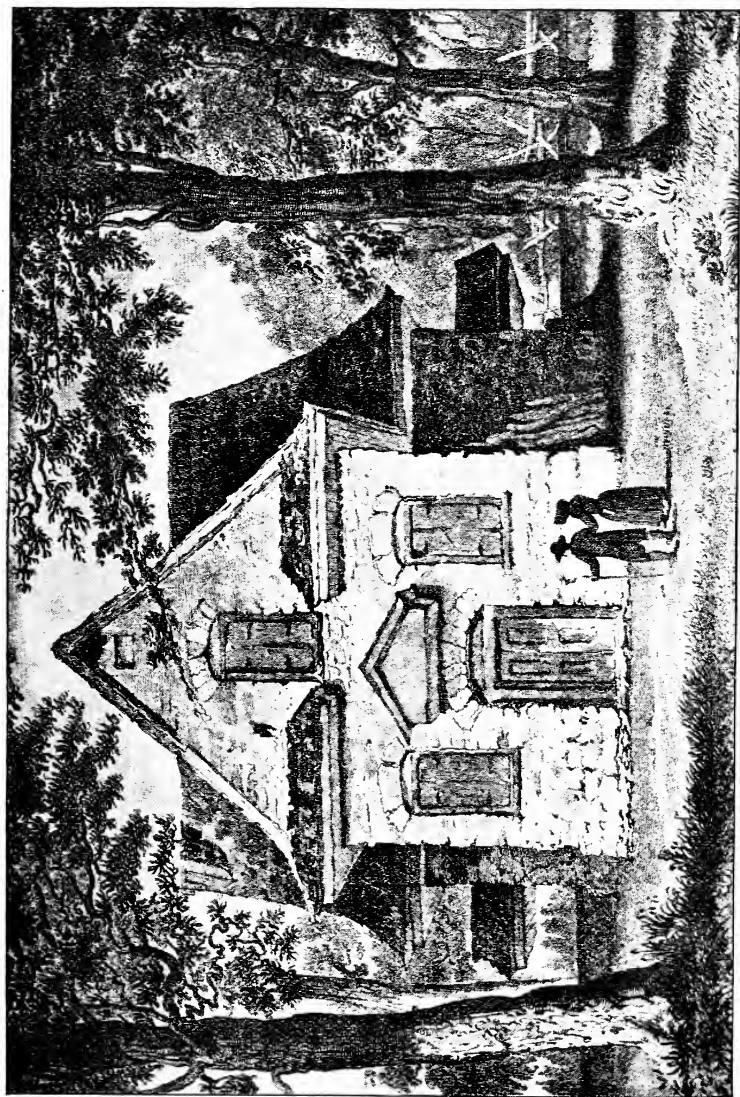
Not far away, by the roadside, on the highway that passes here, is a stone dwelling-house of the early Friends, a stone of which is plainly marked 1695.

If there was stone that could be used for that house, may not some in this building be of like antiquity?

Friends are a truthful people, and we are unwilling to believe that they would have so misrepresented their work as to proclaim to the passer-by that this house was built in 1695, if it had not been erected until 1713. As it now stands it differs in appearance from any other ancient Friends’ meeting-house, the smaller part being attached to the larger in such a way as to form, architecturally, a cross. Small as it is it has evidently not been all built at the same time, and the north end bears marks of the greater age.

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\* Different authorities claim that the meeting-house of 1695 was a building of logs, which was replaced by this structure in 1713.



OLD VIEW OF MERION MEETING-HOUSE.





The chimney is in the middle of the building, between the two parts, the passage from one to the other being through what was probably at one time an open fire-place in an outer wall. It has been enlarged and changed at different times ; alterations have been made in the heights of the ceiling and upper gallery. The latter is very curious and interesting.

The whole building is in a good state of preservation, though many regret the modern plastering on the outside walls covering the original " rubble work " and pointed stone. The needed improvement might have been done in the form of restoration. On the grounds are venerable trees and an ancient horse-block, survivals of the days gone by.

With the existing evidence we feel we can justly claim that two centuries have passed since the erection of a part of this house, and that the meeting here truthfully commemorates that event.

With the establishment of Merion Meeting are closely connected the names of Haverford and Schuylkill, and a little later that of Radnor, followed by the Valley, forming what is known as Haverford or Radnor Monthly Meeting.

The first Monthly Meeting recorded in the minutes, still preserved, was held 10th of Second month, 1684, at Thomas Duckett's house in Schuylkill ; then followed one at John Bevan's house in Haverford, and Hugh Roberts' house in Merion. Soon after the first meeting a committee was appointed to select suitable grounds for burial-places near the three meetings. Of the three grounds selected, those of Haverford and Merion, with additions, are still used ; that of Schuylkill has long ago been overrun and occupied by Philadelphia's increasing business. It was on the Schuylkill front of Thomas Duckett's farm, at what is now Thirty-second and Market streets, and after some time passed from the Society of Friends into the possession of strangers. The street at the west end of Market street bridge passes through it, all traces of it having now disappeared. We have no knowledge of any meeting-house ever being built at this place.

After 1688 any mention of it in connection with Haverford ceases.

The minutes of Haverford Monthly Meeting from the first date are preserved in order for more than two years, then occurs a blank of seven years, and although the record begins again before the date stone tells us Merion meeting-house was built, we can find no mention of its erection, no appointment of a committee, no collection of funds.

Our friend, Dr. George Smith, who was so deeply interested in his own meeting of Haverford, as well as in all the branches of Radnor Monthly Meeting, says in his valuable History of Delaware County that "there are undoubted facts to show that Haverford meeting-house was erected in 1688 or 1689." After its erection all Monthly Meetings were held there. The first Monthly Meeting held at Merion meeting-house seems to have been in 1698.

The minute says: "At our Monthly Meeting held at Haverford, the 22d of Second month, 1698, it is concluded that the Monthly Meeting for business be kept in course here, at Merion, and Radnor." Later still a minute states "that for the convenience of Radnor Friends and those that settle upward, every other Monthly Meeting shall be held at Haverford."

Minutes of the women Friends of Haverford, beginning in the year 1684, are still preserved. They consist principally of collections for the relief of the poor, and were made mostly in measures of corn and wheat, "what Friends can best spare," women Friends being generally the contributors. The Query as to poor Friends' necessities being looked after and relief afforded, could be truly answered in the affirmative.

Whatever was needed, whether it was a cow, a working implement, household goods, or the loan of money, was promptly furnished, if not by the meeting, then by a thoughtful, observant neighbor. If one family was homeless, some one better provided found vacant room in his own home for his less favored fellow-member. The charity of those days clasped the hand

closer than the philanthropy of these. "Nor was their care in these respects confined to their own little communities. Wherever suffering humanity was found, our Quaker ancestors were ever ready to contribute to its relief." Haverford Monthly Meeting (which name stands for this whole Welsh section) subscribed £60, 14s., 11d. to the relief of Friends of New England, who had lost their crops and been molested by the Indians.

John ap Thomas, whose name is most conspicuous in the annals of Merion, never saw the land for which he negotiated; he died before the arrangements for coming to America were completed; but his widow, Katharine Thomas, a brave Christian woman, with her children, carried out the family plan. At her house and that of Hugh Roberts took place all marriages of members in those early days, to prepare for which seems to have been the principal business of the Monthly Meeting. The children of John ap Thomas took the name of John, or Jones; they were Thomas, Cadwalader, Robert, and Katharine Jones, the name being thus changed after the Welsh custom. It is still an honor to the ancestry from which it came.

At the house of Hugh Roberts, which must have been near here, as his land adjoined this land, on the second Fifth-day in Fourth month, 1684, was held the first meeting by Friends at Merion, of which there remains any account. This was a Monthly Meeting, and no doubt the meetings for worship had been regularly held earlier than this at the same freely-offered home.

Hugh Roberts was, says the "Early History of Merion," one of the most useful of the associates of William Penn in his new settlement. His Welsh home was in the parish of Llanvawr, and was known by the name of Ciltalgrith, meaning "the corner at the end of the hill." The old house is now gone, but a newer house on the old site commands one of the finest views in Merionethshire."

His manuscript journal says he was the son of Robert

ap Hugh of Llyndewydd near Bala, and was born and lived in Penllyn, in Wales.

His first wife was Jane Owen, who died in 1686. He afterwards married Elizabeth John, who died in 1691.

Hugh Roberts died while on a religious visit to Long Island at the house of John Rodman, Sixth month 18th, 1702, and says the memorial written of him, "on the 20th was interred at Merion, after which a large meeting was held, wherein the Lord's presence was sweetly enjoyed, and several living testimonies borne concerning his faithfulness to God and satisfaction of his eternal well-being."

His descendants are among Philadelphia's most useful and respected citizens.

A certificate from his home meeting was furnished him and his wife on their first coming to America in 1683, wherein it is stated that "he is one that hath both owned and received ye trueth for these fourteen years past, and walked since blameless in conversation and serviceable in his place upon all accounts, according to his talents. His wife likewise likeminded walking in the trueth and a good example to others." A letter appreciative of his ministry and service was given to him at the close of a visit to his native land in 1690. It also certifies to the merits of his "dear wife Elizabeth," and desires that they and their children "shall be under the divine hand of providence, who ruleth the winds and commandeth the sea at his pleasure."

He must have crossed the Atlantic at least once again on a religious visit, for his journal says: "In the year 1697 the 15th day of Twelfth month, I set from home to visit Friends in England and Wales." Several Friends accompanied him. They took ship at the mouth of James river, "where ye fleet met, and stayed on board fifteen days before we sailed, and had several meetings from ship to ship, to ye great comfort and satisfaction of our souls, and upon ye 7th day of ye Third month, we sailed out of ye capes of Virginia.

“Upon ye 14th day of ye Fourth month we struck ground at eighty-five fathoms water. On ye 17th day we saw ye land of old England, and on ye 22d of ye said month we arrived at Plymouth.”

Shortly after his death a loving testimony was written concerning his life and labors by his friend John Bevan, which is still kept in the records of the meeting.

Hugh Roberts's mother died in 1699, and is buried in the grave-yard at Merion. A testimony concerning her is written by her son in his journal.

Amongst his papers are some in the Welsh language, both prose and poetry. Manuscript scraps of Welsh poetry are also preserved by the descendants of Edward Reese. These have been literally translated for the pleasure of their interested and curious possessors.

Haverford Monthly Meeting had maintained a direct correspondence with the Yearly Meeting of Wales. Ellis Pugh, a Welsh preacher, settled first at Radnor and afterwards at Plymouth. He paid a religious visit to his native land in 1707, and upon his return a concern came upon him to write a book, “To direct the unlearned Britons of low degree to know God, and Christ, the life eternal.” Haverford and Gwynedd united to publish this Welsh book, and after being carefully examined and approved, it was formally recommended to the “overseers of the press” at Philadelphia. Meeting with their approval, it was published under the authority of the Quarterly Meeting. It is doubtless the earliest book in the Welsh language published in America. It was afterwards translated into English by Rowland Ellis, and so re-published in 1727.

Edward ap Reese, who gave, or sold for a nominal sum, to the Society of Friends, the ground on which Merion meeting-house stands, was born in Wales in 1646, and died at Merion in 1728. He was one of the seventeen who came with their families in the ship *Lyon*. He was twice married. His first wife died in 1699, leaving several children, one of whom was born in a stone hut on the Schuylkill bank in 1683. His

second wife was Rebecca Humphreys, whose father and mother, Samuel Humphreys and Elizabeth Reese, were married in Wales before two Justices of the Peace, Morris Wynne and Robert Owen, "ye 20th day of April 1658," which is one of the earliest, if not the first marriage on record, performed without the aid of a priest. Samuel Humphreys died in Wales, but his wife and children came to Pennsylvania, where their descendants still live.

His great-grandson, Joshua Humphreys, may, Dr. Smith says, be considered the father of the American Navy.

Edward Reese was an acceptable minister of the Gospel amongst his people, and gave his message to them in the Welsh language. He made a religious visit to his native land in 1721, bringing with him on his return a certificate of welcome service beyond the sea. In his will is a bequest of ten pounds towards building a wall for the graveyard. By deed in 1747 land for a school-house near the meeting was transferred to trustees by a son of Edward Reese for the sum of five shillings, an amount probably never paid, being named only to make the title good. The name Reese was changed in the second generation to Preece, and later to Price, the first family name in this country being still used by the descendants as a Christian name.

The last marriage that occurred in Merion Meeting-house was that of Benjamin Hunt and Esther Price, Tenth month 16th, 1834. Esther Price Hunt is a descendant of Edward Reese, and is still living.

During the dark days of the Revolution the Welsh Friends of this section were included in the general suffering. Between the two contending armies their goods and money were taken for the support of both.

Cornwallis's army, as well as that of General Washington, are named in our record-books as taking at their need the property of our members.

The meeting kept a partial list of the damage done as the cases were reported by the sufferers, that the loss might be equally shared by the Society. Two of their

meeting-houses, Radnor and the Valley, were occupied by the American soldiers, either as hospitals or officers' quarters.

Trained against bearing arms and shedding a brother's blood, they sought in the main to avoid the strife, though their sympathies were mostly with the struggling colonists. Many of their youthful members disregarded the teachings of the Society, and enlisted or otherwise assisted the cause. Especially was this the case while the American army was in the neighborhood. Irving, in his "Life of Washington," says a number of young Friends joined the patriots before they left Valley Forge. The cases of such were laid before the meeting, and as they had violated the testimonies of Friends, many memberships were thus forfeited.

We are told that many members of the Society of Friends, "and among them men of high repute for their intelligence, took an active part in opposing the arbitrary measures of the mother country." General Anthony Wayne was of Friendly connection, and during the stay of the army at Valley Forge was quartered with his kinsman, who with his wife were prominent members of the Society of Friends.

His intercourse with Friends, as an officer of the army, was satisfactory and just, so far as the state of the times admitted, and has been pleasantly remembered by his posterity and theirs.

Almost all of the Friends from abroad who visited America under a religious concern have held meetings in this old house. William Penn undoubtedly spoke to his Welsh Friends collected for Divine worship on this spot, if not within these walls, though tradition says many of his hearers were unable to understand the sermon which he preached. John Fothergill makes note of a meeting here in 1727, "where a large number were gathered, and the blessed Gospel testimony and humbling power greatly prevailed that day." John Churchman tells of going to Merion, "where we met our worthy friend John Fothergill, who had great and good service therein." In his ministry among the

Welsh settlers here, Rowland Ellis often acted as his interpreter.

Thomas Chalkley, of Philadelphia, who traveled back and forth in the cause of truth continually through his own country and beyond it, held a meeting at Merion in 1724, which was large and satisfactory.

Again in 1737 he was there, he says, "at the funeral of Edward Jones, aged 92, one of the first settlers, a man given to hospitality, a lover of good and virtuous people, and was likewise beloved by them. There were many hundreds of people at his funeral."

Job Scott in 1787 says: "We had a meeting at Radnor and one at Merion, both heavy, laborious seasons for some time, but Truth rose into some dominion, especially in the latter, which on the whole proved a good and refreshing season, and ended in the savor of life."

John Woolman also attended Merion Meeting in 1758.

Robert Sutcliff from England, while on business in America, in the early part of the present century, sojourned at Merion, and wrote of his stay while there. In 1805 he says: "A couple about to be married there, desiring the event to take place on Fifth, instead of Sixth-day, were so accommodated, and the alteration being eligible for a continuance, the day for mid-week meeting was thus changed."

He speaks of a Friend living at Merion, whose sister told him that on William Penn's arrival in America he lodged there with her great-grandfather, and that her grandfather, a boy about twelve years old, curious to see as much as possible of so distinguished a guest, "crept to the chamber door. On peeping through the latchet hole he was struck with awe in beholding this great man upon his knees, and could distinctly hear him in prayer and thanksgiving, that he had thus been provided for in the wilderness." \*

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\* Since writing this paper we have learned that this incident may be found in Watson's "Annals," and is there told as having occurred at Gwynedd. Thomas Evans was a great-grandfather to Susan Jones Nancarrow, who related the above facts to John F. Watson as having taken place there, at the house of her great-grandfather.



Within the memory of the present generation, Ann Jackson, a descendant of Edward Reese, was a beloved Friend and minister at Merion, and her son, Stephen Paschall, gave good and welcome counsel from the gallery seat.

The former is buried at West Chester; the latter in the adjoining yard.

Later Aaron Roberts came to reside near, and attended this meeting.

His wife, a lovely "girl woman," as she is described, soon felt called to proclaim the truth of the Gospel, to the grateful remembrance of those who heard her.

Since their removal from the neighborhood, the Friends who remained have mostly spent the hour for worship in silence, but the faithful still live; one aged man, deprived of his hearing, and otherwise a sufferer, is still a regular, and sometimes the only attender from a distance here.

Years ago, when the nation was sorrow-stricken and mourning for the fall of its leader, a Friend yearning for expression of sympathy such as religion alone can give, would have sought it in the church, but was directed here, where an afternoon meeting was to be held.

Our friend, George Truman, was among those assembled, and moved by the deep grief that shadowed the land, gave forth to the gathered throng such an outpouring of eloquent sorrow in words of hope and faith as are still remembered by those who heard him, and the Friend returned to her home comforted and satisfied.

A stranger, writing of another afternoon meeting here, says of a ministering Friend: "All who listened agree in saying he had the sweetest voice that ever addressed a congregation." For such ministrations through the many years, and for those whose graves have been made near by, is Merion Meeting-house endeared to the Society of Friends, endeared to this neighborhood, and to all who love the relics of an honorable past.

Conspicuous in meeting affairs in a by-gone genera-

tion were the Bowmans. Roger Bowman, the first of the name in America, was born in Derbyshire, England, where the family had lived since 1602.

In one corner of their family estate is a group of fine old ash trees, and under their branches was built in George Fox's time one of the first Friends' meeting-houses in England, which still exists. When the seat of our government was at Philadelphia, Roger Bowman lived near President Washington, whom he always called "George." Though ever watchful of the nation's honor, Washington respected the conscientious principle that led to such a familiarity, and the two became good friends and neighbors.

Descended from the earliest settlers, and closely connected with this house, loving it and its interests, was the George family. Like so many other families of Friends, this one was divided when the Separation, now so much regretted by many members of both branches of the Society, occurred, and like most of them so divided, the ties of blood were stronger than the difference of religious opinion, and love unchanged lived in their hearts, though the divided household worshipped in separate houses.

That branch of the family that remained with the members here, were regular attenders both of business and other meetings, until the friends and neighbors of their faith passed away by death or removal, and they were left almost the remnant here, but faithful to their inherited trust and to their own sense of duty, they rarely missed a meeting, though sometimes no other members met with them.

One by one they too were called from labor here, until a few years since the last one was laid to rest beside his kindred in the adjoining yard, and the greater part of his large property passed by his bequest into the Society of Friends, to establish an advanced school for the benefit of those of its members who had not been so blessed as he in earthly possessions. This bequest is now doing good service under the name of the George School.

Of those who retained their membership with what is known as the Orthodox branch of the Society, Jesse George and his sister Rebecca are well known as Philadelphia's benefactors. The valuable contribution to Fairmount Park, known as George's Hill, was their gift, and many public charities have benefited by their liberal bounty. As they sympathized with the needy whom they knew not, so their gentle love was round about their kindred, their friends, and all with whom they mingled. One whose life had been spent in loving service to them, asked as a favor to be laid in death at their feet, a wish we believe that unforeseen circumstances prevented being gratified.

All of the George family are buried at Merion.

There are other honorable households in this locality that trace their ancestry to the purchasers of the land from William Penn. There are families of this neighborhood well known for their ability in the business of life, that possess marriage certificates and other records closely connected with the history of this meeting-house, but for many years their names have been missing from the list of its members, and those who perform the present work of the Society of Friends within this Monthly Meeting know little of them.

Great have been the changes the two hundred years have wrought. Where was for our predecessors toil and privation, is now apparent ease and prosperity. Yet let us not be unmindful that luxury has ever been an opportunity for corruption, and boast not too much that the present age is such an improvement on the past.

At another ancient meeting-house, in the hush of an autumn twilight, I hear again in recollection the soft, sweet voice of Deborah Wharton, repeating the words of the Master she so earnestly worked to serve: "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." We, too, if we live the same lives of patient suffering, of self-denial, of Christian charity, and of brotherly love, as did so many of those who first turned their hearts to God beneath this roof, will

be an example to those who, two hundred years hence, may be battling with the evils of their day and generation. We have but to live by the same faith and seek for the same grace that made the religion of our forefathers. It was their salvation, and it may be ours.

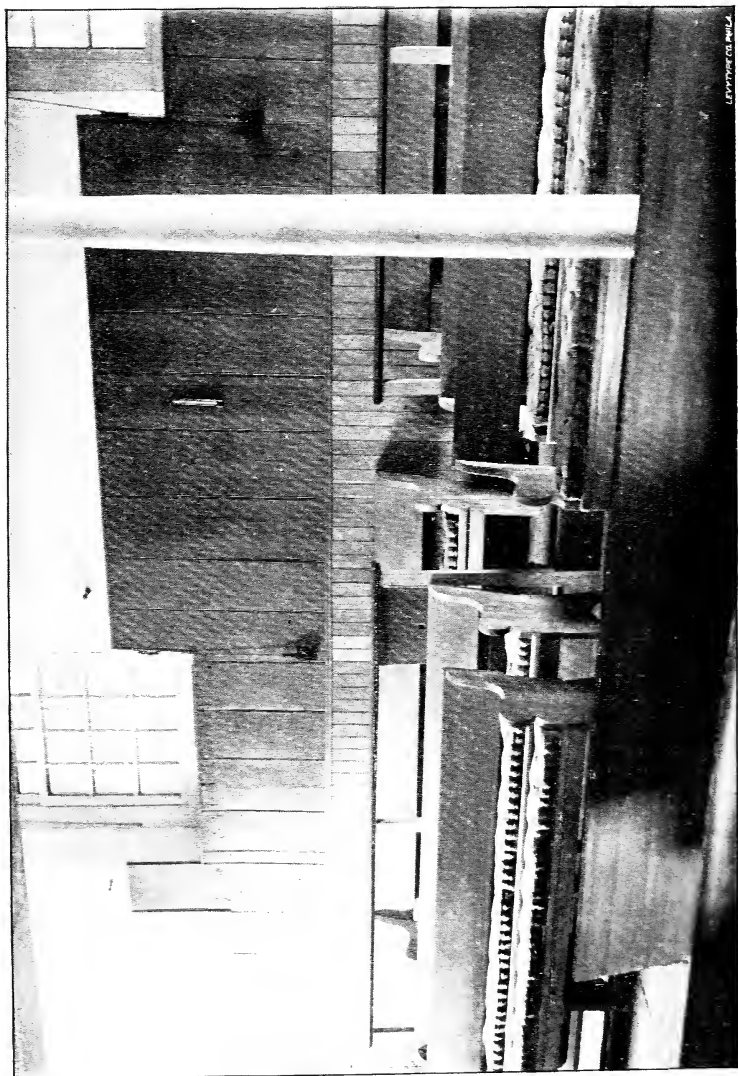
In the records of human greatness there are few examples more worthy of our study and imitation than that of William Penn, the Friend, the founder of Pennsylvania.

Two hundred years have passed since he labored for the benefit of his fellow-men, and walked humbly in obedience to the voice of his Heavenly Father. To-day his name and memory are respected and honored in every civilized land.

His life was largely made up of anxiety, sorrow, and suffering, yet trusting and resigned through all trials, we may see in his experience something of the truth and beauty of the warning he gave to his people :

“No Cross, no Crown.”





VIEW OF INTERIOR OF MERION MEETING-HOUSE.

## P O E M .

BY JAMES B. WALKER, M.D.

STAY, Time, thy rapid, ceaseless flight,  
 While we recall two centuries of thine,  
 And those who bravely struggled for the right,  
 About this modest, friendly, wayside shrine !  
 Thou art called cruel, ruthless Time, by some,  
 Stern Reaper, "ever with the glass and scythe ;"  
 A heartless wrecker, conscienceless and dumb,  
 Before whom mortals e'er despairing writhe !  
 'Tis said thou touchest monuments that mark the great  
 Only to level them in crumbling dust ;  
 A spoiler, fierce and inconsiderate,  
 Unmerciful, unbridled, and unjust !

Not so, we deem thee, kind old Father Time ;  
 A leveler thou, but leveling to the right !  
 Virtue and Justice, in their course sublime,  
 Find thee a master-builder in thy might !  
 Full gently hast thou dealt with this old home,  
 Where on the First-day and amid-week too,  
 Long lines of generations here have come,  
 To show the world their faith, their strength renew.

When Might was right, and Force was law,  
 And the powers that ruled were Strife and Greed,  
 When Church 'gainst Church their forces draw,  
 And religious fervor meant zeal for creed ;  
 When the "Head of the Church," or Pope or King,  
 Knew naught of the power of Love to bless ;  
 But the torments of hell serve their purpose well  
 For all who a different creed confess ;  
 In this seething cauldron of hate and strife,  
 With devotion dwindled to barren form,  
 A man arose, in the strength of life,  
 With an olive branch in the scathing storm !

No creed he clamored, nor outward form,  
 No blinding dogma, the truth to blight,  
 But he sought to lead his fellow-men  
 From the outward forms to the Inner Light !

"A spirit there is in man," he cried,  
 "Which the inspiration from God on high  
 Without assistance from man or creed  
 Giveth understanding abundantly.  
 A still, small voice, this Inner Light,  
 Enlighteneth Christian, Pagan, or Jew,  
 Leads the humblest soul from the darkest night  
 To the light of God and his blessings too!"  
 He called from the prevalent war of creeds  
 Unto Love, religion's severest test,  
 For though Hope and Faith are daily needs,  
 Love shineth ever, brightest and best.

His voice found echo 'mong low and high;  
 Right reason the hearts of many blends,  
 And the gathering band, clasping hand in hand,  
 Take upon them the hallowed name of *Friends*.

They have helped to lift from the dust their race,  
 Teaching man is a child of God, not of sin;  
 That God is a Father whose loving face  
 Never turns to hate for His human kin!  
 Nor the stinging lash, nor the dungeon dark  
 Could cool their enkindled fire of love;  
 Nor the brutal laws by tyrants made  
 Could make them false to their conscience prove!

But the merciless storm of hate, at last  
 Has driven some, amid great distress,  
 From the land of their sires and altar fires,  
 In search of Peace, to the wilderness.  
 Penn's Sylvan woods a haven prove,  
 Though the forest is dense where the savage lurks,  
 But the peace of God has hallowed the sod  
 As their simple doctrine a miracle works!  
 For the savage foe is transformed a friend,  
 And the Treaty of Penn, nor sealed nor signed,  
 Is made to stand, throughout Penn's land,  
 Unbroken, though never an oath to bind.

Here brought they their all to stand or fall;  
 Here built they hearths and homes anew;  
 Here lived they their creed in word or deed,  
 "To others do as you'd have them do."  
 Their conscience, God's supremest gift,  
 They prove their faith in the "old, old story,"



That out of the darkness naught can lift  
 But the "Christ within, the Hope of Glory!"  
 This house they builded of wood and stone,  
 Which their faithful lives have consecrated,  
 As here they humbly sought the throne  
 Of Grace, that they be rejuvenated.  
 No spires toward Heaven its roof do mark,  
 For the aspirations of its people  
 Were reaching God-ward in light and dark  
 And needed no heavenward-pointing steeple.  
 Old meeting-house, so plain and quaint,  
 Devoid of lofty spire or dome,  
 Here many a household's hallowed saint  
 Sought grace divine for use at home!  
 The shadows are soothing on thy lawn,  
 Thy very atmosphere is peace,  
 And the silence creeping our hearts upon,  
 Bids doubt and discord and rancor cease.  
 The hands that built thee, heads that planned,  
 And hearts that thee have consecrated,  
 Long since their human lives have spanned,  
 Their dust to earth, their souls translated!  
 They builded well this meeting-house,  
 But, better still, their daily record  
 Of lives which Right and Truth espouse;  
 No evil stain their pages checkered!  
 We praise them for their earnestness  
 In all that counts for man's improving;  
 Their honest faith, with special stress  
 On God's omnipotence in loving!  
 We bless them that the "wrath of God"  
 Was seen to be of man's invention;  
 Our sinning cloudeth not His face  
 But blinds our human comprehension.  
 No need for priest to shrive or bless,  
 Nor complex scheme for man's salvation;  
 Down, to man's utmost lowliness,  
 Reaches God's hand in restoration!  
 . . . . .  
 Here, plainly bonneted and gowned,  
 With faces saintly, sweet, and pure,  
 Have calmly sat the seasons round,  
 Spreading an incense heaven-born, sure,  
 Those mothers of our Israel,  
 Who nurtured us through childhood's prattle,

And saved our manhood's wandering feet  
 From many a snare in life's rude battle!  
 Their memories linger in our lives,  
 The halo deepening round their faces;  
 We see them as we meet to-day,  
 All in their once familiar places.  
 We've love for all the human race,  
 Believing all mankind are brothers,  
 And can't help wishing all had had  
 Like us, good, old-time, Quaker mothers!

Old meeting-house, so quiet thou,  
 Some think thy silence of the tomb;  
 Seeing but darkness gathering now,  
 With bowed heads they await the doom.  
 But unto us thy silence breathes  
 A "peace that passeth understanding";  
 Thy countless hallowed memories,  
 To active, earnest life commanding.  
 Thou speak'st of "swords to plowshares turned,"  
 Of war's rude blasts and visions gory  
 Transformed to nobler voice of "Peace,  
 Good will," the near forgotten story;  
 Of savage warrior, robbed of hate,  
 His knife in sheath, his hatchet rusted;  
 Of Treaty kept inviolate,  
 As each the other fully trusted;  
 Of voices raised in Freedom's cause,  
 To which 'twere treason e'en to harken,—  
 Brave cries against inhuman laws,  
 Which once our nation's fair face darken.

What though the numbers gathering here,  
 Are growing fewer still and fewer,  
 The influence started at this source  
 Is spreading outward, onward, sure!

Nothing that's good shall perish. Out,  
 In circles spreading far and wide,  
 The grace extends, till reaching all,  
 Naught human will be found outside.  
 The nations cry for peace. War's realm  
 Is yearly growing small and smaller,  
 While Peace, sometime a suppliant child,  
 Is growing manlier and taller!  
 Its day is dawning gloriously,  
 And the old earth, its lessons learning,

Is less and less in creeds concerned,  
 And more for righteous fruit is yearning.  
 Black night is vanishing! The sun,  
 A brilliant globe of light, is rising,  
 Its flood is streaming onward, vast  
 Enough for all the world's baptizing!  
 The creeds less rigid are; man-made,  
 In times when Light was showing dim,  
 They bind like burial cerements,  
 And burst they must on growing limb!

Let us not grieve if numbers fail  
 To fill the old familiar benches,  
 They have not gone "without the veil,"  
 But find good work in other trenches.  
 What though our sect may dwindle more,  
 One fact should make us much amends,  
 The best of men, in all the creeds,  
 Are clasping hands as *earnest friends*!

## WHAT THE FRIEND HAS DONE IN THE PAST.

BY ALLEN C. THOMAS.

IT is fitting that men and communities should at times review past years, and ask of them what message they bring of encouragement, of warning, of teaching, or of strength. It is with no feelings of pride or of laudation that we look back to-day at the work of our fathers to glance at what they have done ; but it is to bring before us in grateful remembrance their faith, their earnestness, and their devotion to principle and to the everlasting truth.

Two hundred years ago, except in Holland, there was little or no religious liberty in Europe ; toleration was almost unheard of, freedom of thought, of conscience, of worship, and of doctrine was held by many to be absolutely wrong. Retaliation was considered to be the chief end in punishment—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth being the standard—and punishment itself was terribly severe ; prisons the world over were sinks of iniquity and vice, and foul beyond description from the total lack of sanitary care. Slavery was held to be lawful, and good men had no hesitation at engaging in the slave trade or of receiving profit from the dreadful traffic. Ordinary buying and selling was a continual struggle between buyer and seller to see which could get the advantage of the other. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, particularly in England, society was luxurious, artificial, and conventional ; laws were cumbrous, justice was too often perverted, juries venial, and judges arbitrary. As between nation and nation, war was, if not the normal condition, at least of frequent occurrence, while but very few individuals questioned, even in the abstract, the lawfulness

of war for the Christian. A careful student of the age cannot fail to be struck with the high position which was accorded to authority in Church and State and in social life. Outward standards of life and practice, particularly in church affairs, were set up, to which every one was expected, and, whenever practicable, forced to conform. Englishmen had been restive under this rule and rebelled. Some few separated from Church and State and betook themselves in a sad pilgrimage to Holland, and thence to America. Others were successful for a time in purifying the outward ceremony of worship, and also in driving from the English throne a king who finally sealed his belief in authority with his blood. But still the belief in authority was strong, and the spirit of uniformity so ruled that a lofty son of England was fain to cry out—

“New presbyter is but old priest writ large.”

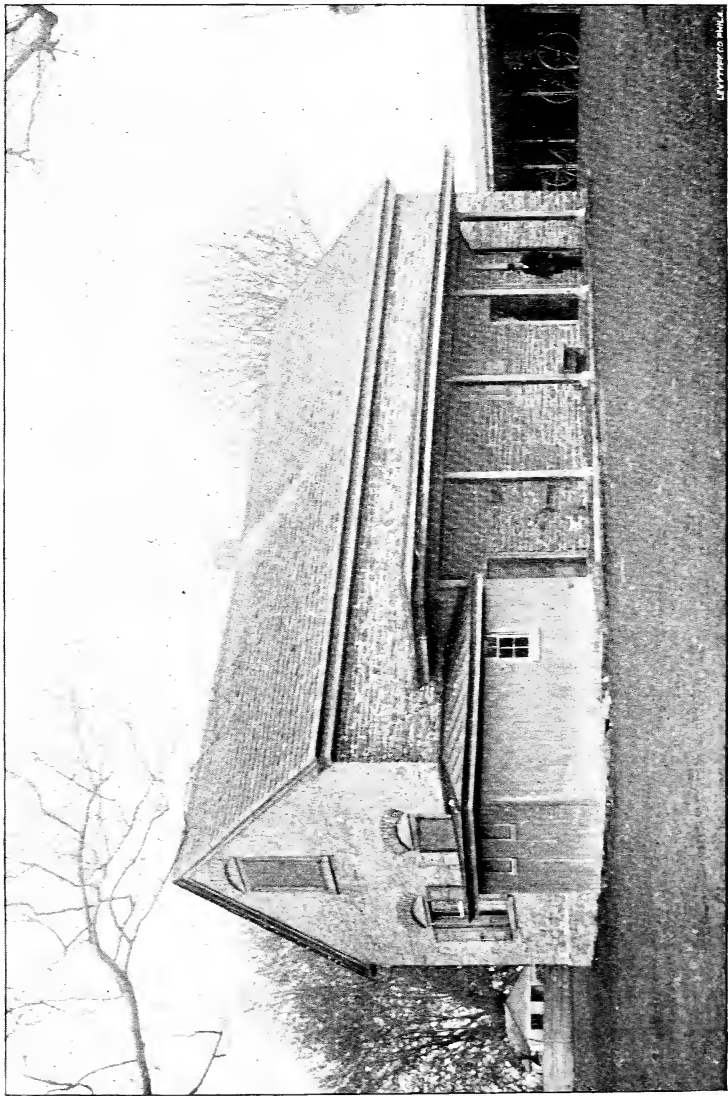
Like the voice of one crying in a wilderness, George Fox proclaimed, with a force and clearness rarely equalled, the old truth, old but ever new, that God speaks directly to every individual soul, and that with this divine message comes a personal responsibility that cannot be cast off; he taught a personal sense of divine communion independent of church organization or regulations, a direct communication of the will of God that may not be unheeded with impunity. He placed the whole life upon one plane, to be ruled by the same laws, to be guided by the same principles; the loftiest aspirations and the humblest duties were to be alike governed by the divine law. He taught that men cannot commit their consciences into the keeping of another; that “they should trust to principles and leave consequences to God; to confess their ideal even when attainment was impossible.”

It is hard for us of the present day to believe that these truths were not generally accepted in Fox's time, but that in upholding them thousands suffered and languished in loathsome jails, that thousands were burdened with heavy fines, some were banished from home

and country, some sold into slavery, some condemned to death, experiencing the extreme penalty. In the face of all opposition, of suffering and of death, the Friends held on their way, and not only that, but attracted to their side others who joined heartily with them. By patient endurance of grievous suffering incurred in refusing to obey the infamous "Conventicle Act" in England, and unrighteous laws in America, they were almost wholly instrumental in winning, not only for themselves, but for all their fellow-citizens, freedom for the exercise of religious thought and worship; by the refusal of Friends who were tax-assessors to levy taxes for the support of church ministers, a refusal persevered in, despite protracted imprisonment, the separation of church and State in Massachusetts was definitely settled; and by steady though passive refusal to take judicial oaths they gained for all, both in England and America, the privilege of affirmation.

Again, the value which Fox and his followers placed upon the individual led to not a few remarkable results. The universality of the work of the Holy Spirit not only laid a responsibility upon each individual for his own life and work, but made him ready and earnest to work for others. No one was too high to be addressed, no one too low or too degraded to be lifted up; Christian or unbeliever, Turk or Jew, bond or free, white or black, all were enlightened to a greater or less degree, and therefore to them was something due from those who might have greater light, and who moreover had a universal message to proclaim. The Friend did not stop with generalities; principles must be carried into practice, doctrine must be illustrated by daily life. So we find that George Fox was one of the very first to raise his voice against the evils of West Indian slavery, one of the first who emphatically declared that negroes should be treated as men, urging that they should be dealt with "mildly and gently"; and without fear he told the slave-holders of Barbadoes that if they were in the condition of their slaves they would consider it "a very great bondage and cruelty," and, when such a





FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE AT HAVERFORD, PA. (BUILT IN 1700.)



thing was almost unknown, he urged again and again that the Gospel should be preached to the negro slaves.

In 1688, on the 18th of the Second month [April], German Friends of Germantown drew up that ever-memorable protest against "traffic in the bodies of men," and against handling "men as cattle"; a document believed to be the first official protest of any religious body against slavery. The leaven worked slowly, but through the labors of Anthony Benezet and others, above all, of John Woolman, by the year 1787 there was not a slave in the possession of an acknowledged Friend. How much members of the Society have since done against slavery and on behalf of the slave is a matter of familiar history.

The interest taken in the American Indians by John Eliot and Roger Williams, and the kindly treatment of them by not a few of the early settlers is well known, but no religious body in America, as a whole and as individuals, except the Society of Friends, has always and uniformly treated the Indian as a man and brother. George Fox and his band of missionaries preached to the Indians, and urged upon the settlers kindly and brotherly treatment of them. It was reserved for our noble and honored predecessor, William Penn, in this great commonwealth which he founded, to give a practical object-lesson to the world to show that the law of love, if honestly practiced toward the red man, would be understood and reciprocated, and that agreements made with him, though not sworn to, would never be broken so long as carried out by the white man in that spirit of mutual trust and understanding in which they were conceived and executed. What other colony has the record of not a settler killed or injured by an Indian for nearly seventy years, and that with an exposed frontier, and during three colonial wars? Not the least valuable lesson then which the Friend has taught, has been that the heart of even the untutored savage understands the law of love and will reciprocate it; a fact true not only of colonial days, but illustrated in succeeding years by many examples.

William Penn in his laws for Pennsylvania removed death as a penalty from the list of all crimes except murder and treason, and doubtless would not have excepted these had it been possible to do so, and he did this at a time when English laws made over two hundred crimes punishable by death. He also, a century before John Howard, strove to make the prisons of Pennsylvania places where the reformation of the criminal was to be aimed at instead of retaliation for the crime committed. It was Elizabeth Fry who again awakened the consciences of Englishmen to the general neglect of their prisons, to the indiscriminate mixing of prisoners, to the immorality of their surroundings, and to their sufferings in the prisons in which they were confined.

It was William Penn who placed before the world a frame of government far in advance of any others then in existence, and unsurpassed for its moderation, for its justice, for its high ideals, for the care taken to secure the rights of the governed, who were themselves, to all intents and purposes, the rulers. That this "Holy Experiment" was not a complete success was due, not to any shortcomings in the plan, but to the interference of the English government, and to the lack of faith in those who lived under its laws, and enjoyed the blessings of its free and liberal provisions.

That war is contrary to the teachings of the New Testament was a logical conclusion of the position taken by the early Friends, and the sufferings undergone in defense of this belief have been many and severe. In Pennsylvania, again, we have the practical illustration of a State founded upon the principles of peace, and of a government which existed for years without forts, without cannon, without any of the implements of war, and which lived at peace with its neighbors, both civilized and savage, for two generations. Arbitration as a means for the settlement of differences was early introduced among Friends, and was provided for in Penn's Frame of Government, not only as between citizen and citizen, but also as between

Indian and white. So sure was the great man that this principle was the true one for the settlement of differences, that in 1694 he published "An Essay toward the present and future peace of Europe by the establishment of an European Diet, Parliament, or Estates," anticipating in this paper most of the modern arguments for international arbitration.

George Fox tells us that his father was called "Righteous Christer," on account of the purity of his life and the justness of his dealings. His greater son, more than others of his generation, more than many in this our day, believed in a righteousness of life and conduct. He taught that a man's word should be as good as his bond,—nay, was his bond,—and that in all his dealings he should be absolutely truthful. Friends imprisoned for conscience' sake were trusted to march from prison to prison, and from prison to trial, without a guard, on a simple promise to appear. Their very persecutors trusted them without hesitation. The same principle of yea, yea ; nay, nay, was carried into their business, and it was the Quaker shop-keeper who introduced into English trade the practice of fixed prices and strict uprightness in dealing.

Friends have been foremost in the position accorded to woman in social life and in the church. Fox early saw that the universality of the dispensation of the Spirit forbade the exclusion of woman from any part of the divine commission, and so the share of woman in the gift of the ministry of the Word was placed upon an absolute equality with that of men, while in other respects to woman was given a place and an authority unknown at that time elsewhere. The result of this righteous course is shown in the long list of women, from Elizabeth Hooton, George Fox's early convert, to the present day,—women, whose counsel, whose works, and whose example have been such an inspiration to the body, and so often a blessing to the community in which they have lived.

It is hardly the place to show how the principles which have been mentioned led to dependence upon the

Spirit for practical guidance in matters spiritual and temporal, to simplicity in worship, to the laying aside of ritual, disuse of rite and ceremony, and to absence of class distinction, as into clergy and laity. Nor is it necessary to go further into particulars, for enough has been said to show how the very constitution of the Society of Friends has led those belonging to it, not only as individuals, but also as a body, into the adoption of great principles and into the carrying of them out to a remarkable degree in daily life and practice.

What the Friend has done has not been so much to enunciate new truths as to have been the pioneer in calling attention, by precept and example, to old truths sometimes forgotten, sometimes covered up by custom and precedent, sometimes believed to be impracticable under the present constitution of the world. Because much of what the seventeenth and eighteenth century Friends suffered and died to gain is now the possession of all, we of the nineteenth century are apt to forget their services. It is the province of such occasions as the present to recall what our forefathers have done in order that we may be nerved to perform the duties that are before us, animated by the same faith which filled their hearts.

## THE PRESENT WORK OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

BY ISAAC H. CLOTHIER.

ON the occasion of the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of this old meeting-house, which in its quaint simplicity has come down to us a relic and a representative of by-gone days,—even the early days of the Society of Friends,—it is fitting that those who hold the faith of the founders of that Society should come together on this historic ground to recall the memories of those early days, to devoutly rejoice together in the possession of a modest yet glorious heritage, and to strengthen each other and dedicate themselves anew to the duty of the day and the shaping of the future.

This large company composed of old and young, of those who in the natural order must soon pass on to the higher life, of the mature and middle-aged, now in full activity, of the young, pressing ever onward to take their places; all these, the successors of the little company of Friends who met here two hundred years ago,—may well recall the memories which cluster around these walls, and with just pride in their worthy and honored ancestry, resolve that in these altered times, and under new conditions, they will preserve the traditions of the Fathers, in their simple, steadfast faith, their heroic devotion to principle, and in their consecration to the duty of their day. The history of the old house and of our worthy ancestors who worshiped beneath its roof has been well given in your hearing; the part assigned me is to sketch the duty and influence of the Society of Friends in the world to-day.

We are among the representatives of a Society which, though one of the smallest in numbers from its foundation until now, has yet commanded a measure of atten-

tion and exercised an influence in the world entirely disproportioned to the size of its membership. Reviled and persecuted first in England, then in this country, and held up to public scorn and ridicule, the Society grew while persecution lasted, and not until it ceased did its growth lessen. But though never large in membership, and numbering to-day in England and America perhaps less than one hundred and fifty thousand souls, its influence has been extraordinary in the world. John Bright said: "I am a member of a small but somewhat remarkable sect, a religious body which had a remarkable origin, and in its early days, at least, a somewhat remarkable history. It is of all the religious sects the one that has most at heart the equality and equal rights of men." And Gladstone has lately written: "Whatever may be thought of Quaker theology, the character of the Quaker has left an indelible impression upon the world."

The principles of the Society scarcely need to be re-stated here. At the World's Congress of Religions in Chicago, two years ago, and at the Bi-Centennial of the establishment of New York Yearly Meeting, the present year, at Flushing, terse and admirable statements of the faith, history, and work of the Society were made by our ablest representative writers. While we can hope to add but little to their presentation, it is fitting that on this Anniversary occasion we too should recount in our own way that which cannot be dwelt upon too often,—the simplicity and sufficiency of the faith of the Friends and its potent influence on mankind by reason of its very simplicity. And that has been the corner-stone, the essence of the faith of the Friends,—*simplicity* of faith and of life.

Throughout all history the greatest contentions among men have been in the name of religion. The Protestant Reformation, brought about by the corruptions of the Church, was a step in the direction of a purer and more enlightened religion, but its great apostle, Luther, evidenced the intolerant spirit of the age by declining to clasp hands with the Swiss reformer,

Zwingli,—though both were striving for the same ends, —because the latter could not honestly subscribe to every article of a complicated confession of faith. John Calvin, a man of the highest moral elevation and religious fervor, caused Servetus to be burned at the stake because of his religious opinions. A century later George Fox stirred the religious world with a revival of the simplicity of the religion of Christ, and William Penn proclaimed that for their religious opinions men are responsible to God alone. The great advance in enlightenment since is evidenced by comparing the intense and gloomy theology of Jonathan Edwards early in the eighteenth century, or even that of Lyman Beecher, nearly a century later, with that of leading evangelical teachers of the present day, notably Phillips Brooks and Lyman Abbott. Compare Edwards's expressions regarding Original Sin and his "Sinners in the hands of an angry God" with this recent utterance of Lyman Abbott: "The bond of the Church is love; the Church is a body of loyal Christians doing Christ's work in Christ's way. The flowers got into a dispute one day as to what was a flower. The trailing arbutus said: 'Nothing is a flower unless it has a vine and hides itself under the leaves;' and the tulip said: 'Nothing is a flower unless it grows out of a bulb and puts its flower head a little above the ground;' and the tulip-tree said: 'Nothing is a flower unless it has a root and trunk and branches, and all the flowers five or six feet at least above the ground.' And the spring sun looked down upon them and said: 'Whatever is fragrant and whatever is beautiful is a flower.' It may hide itself like the Quaker, beneath the leaves where men cannot find it; and it may have the most elaborate organization running down into the roots of history, like the Episcopal Church; and it may stand anywhere between the two:—the flower is a flower, and the devout soul is a devout soul, and wherever souls are brought together to do God's work in God's way there is a church of the living God."

In an age of theological complications and of dis-

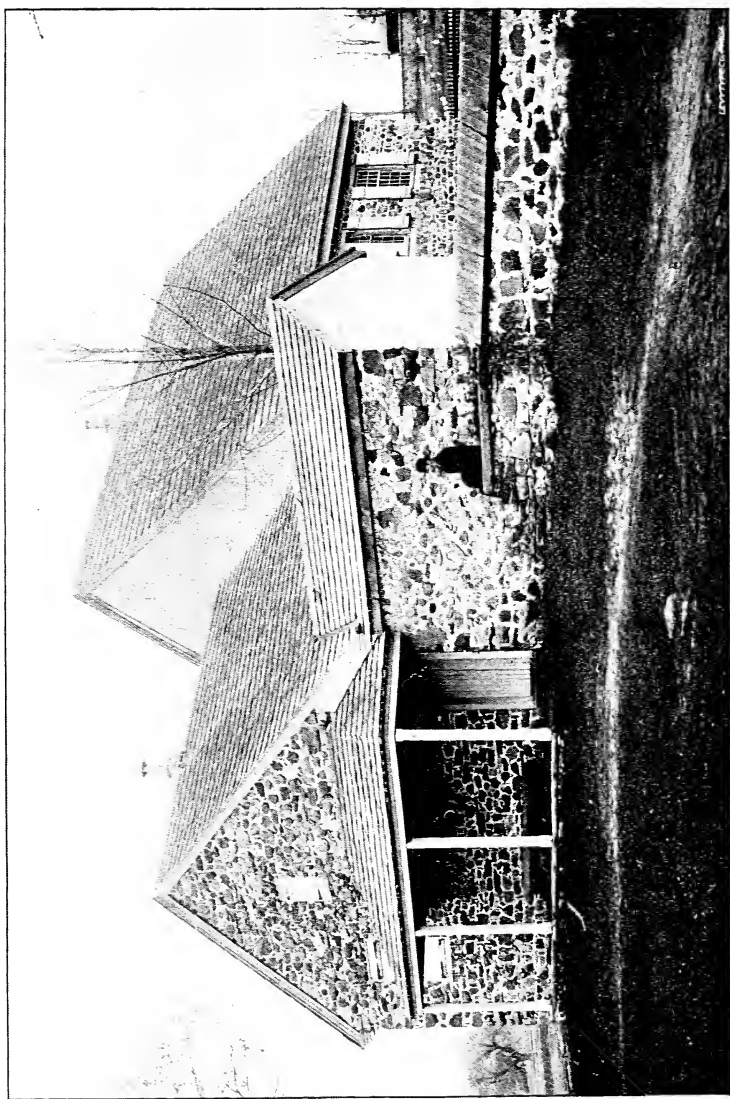
putations regarding religion, George Fox felt it his mission to call the people away therefrom to the Inner Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world, to a free gospel ministry, and to purity and simplicity of life. Pioneers of reform, no doubt, are apt to overdo or to seem to overdo, for only by strong contrasts can the minds of men be awakened. Thus the early Friends, protesting both by speech and practice against the abuses of their time, were no doubt in some instances fanatical. But the duties and methods of one age are not the duties and methods of another; and the stern war-cry of George Fox in the seventeenth century, calling the people back to first principles of religion, and the extreme simplicity of the life of John Woolman, a century later, may be quite uncalled-for in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

In the two hundred years which have elapsed since the foundation of the Society of Friends, the Christian church has had a great awakening. It has been often claimed that this spiritual revival has been largely due to the influence of our Society. How far this may be true it is difficult to judge, and certainly a body so small in number as ours,—compared with the body of the Christian church,—should be careful not to claim too much. But the fact remains that a great spiritual development began with the time of George Fox, and that his loud call to a return to the simple religion of Christ, to attention to the monitions of the Inner Light, was the forerunner of a religious enlightenment and liberality which has since, despite many drawbacks, steadily progressed in the Christian world.

Perhaps it is not too much to claim that this small body of professing Christians has been the leaven which has leavened the mass, and that the power and influence claimed for the Friends, though not shown by increase of membership or the controlling influence of numbers, is indicated by the recognition to a greater or less degree of the vital testimonies of the Society by nearly all sects of professing Christians. It cannot be denied that a recognition of the essential principle of the Inner







FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE AT RADNOR, PA. (BUILT IN 1718.)

Light, of increased simplicity and liberality of faith as compared with belief in complex theological dogmas, and a disposition to insist upon certain uncompromising beliefs and religious observances, is now widespread among the churches. Belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, in a practical religion which *lives its faith*, in an enlightened liberality which declines to insist upon any particular creed or confession of faith, but which concedes to every human being the absolute right to his own belief, insisting only that the life be pure and void of offense, is to-day much more prevalent in the Christian world than two hundred, one hundred, or even fifty years ago. What part the Society of Friends has indeed had in this great spiritual and practical revival of Christ's kingdom among men cannot be precisely stated. But the fact that the testimonies to which from the beginning the Society has felt impelled to call the world have, despite many drawbacks, taken firm root among the churches, and that the Society, despite its smallness of numbers, has had an influence recognized by a large portion of the Christian world, is powerful testimony to the character and efficacy of its work among men.

Friends have been from the beginning a peculiar people ; peculiar in their style of dress, in their attempts at perfect honesty of manner and of speech, in their manner of silent worship, and in the conduct of their business meetings. Perhaps no other religious gatherings in the world transact business in the same way, arriving at decisions not by parliamentary usages or the vote of majorities, but by the general sense and spiritual weight of the membership. I remember a quaint remark quoted to me long ago by one of our most highly respected members : " There are two ways of doing a thing, the right way and the Friends' way." I did not understand this to imply that the Friends' way was not the right way, but that it was a peculiar way of arriving at correct results.

There is always danger in peculiarities, and indulgence in them without sound reasons, so far from being

an evidence of strength, is generally a sign of weakness and should be most carefully guarded. And yet the peculiar method of Friends in the transaction of business, has been on the whole successful, and is perhaps an ideal even though an unattainable system of government on any extended scale.

But however great and heroic may have been the work of the Society in the past, it is not on work already done that any Society can repose in security and safety, and it must be so especially with the Society of Friends. Not on the achievements of our ancestors can we or our descendants rest. The heritage which came to us can only be transmitted to our descendants by our faithfulness to duty and to the work of our day.

What is the work of the Society at the present time? or, as is sometimes claimed, has its mission ceased among men, and after its remarkable history shall it disappear as an organization and be swallowed up by the other religious bodies of the day? Is its work approaching a conclusion in the acceptance of its original testimonies by the Christian Church, or shall it have a future of activity and influence even comparable to its distinguished history? These are questions which face us to-day, and the answers are not easily to be found. Shall future history record that the career of the Society of Friends was but an incident in religious history, and that having stirred the churches to a recognition of the Divine life in the soul of man, and of the simplicity and spirituality of the religion of Jesus Christ, it passed away and was seen of men no more? These may be strange questions to ask on an anniversary occasion, when mutual congratulations seem to be the duty of the hour. But a time of rejoicing for past achievement should also be a time of self-examination.

With a population perhaps exceeding seventy millions in this rapidly growing nation, and a growth in membership of nearly all the great religious organizations somewhat correspondent thereto, our own small numbers have not increased, but have remained practically stationary. While size of membership is not a test of

spiritual power, and "one with God is a majority," yet this peculiar people must show by their works a reason for their existence as a separate organization, or they must soon cease to exist as a distinct body.

The age still needs to have held up before it the standard of a pure and vital religion, unvexed by theological dogmas or by cumbrous outward ceremonials. It still needs to have George Fox's cry "turn within," repeated again and again. But evangelical teachers all about us have accepted the call, and are holding the standard up. Where, therefore, lies the separate work of the Friends? With an earnest belief in the mission of the Society and a no less earnest hope for its continuance as a religious force in the world of mankind, I confess I have at times shared a sense of discouragement which has been expressed regarding its future.

It may well be said that we have no especial mission of proselytism, that we do not care to add to our numbers, but only to worship God in our own way. True: but evidences of vitality and of continuance in the body are much to be desired, and the want thereof, even the smallness of numbers of our membership, would seem to be indicative of weakness in the organization as it exists to-day. Have we as a body outlived our usefulness? Are we relying too much upon the past, upon traditions handed down from the early days, instead of the inspiration which comes fresh to every age?

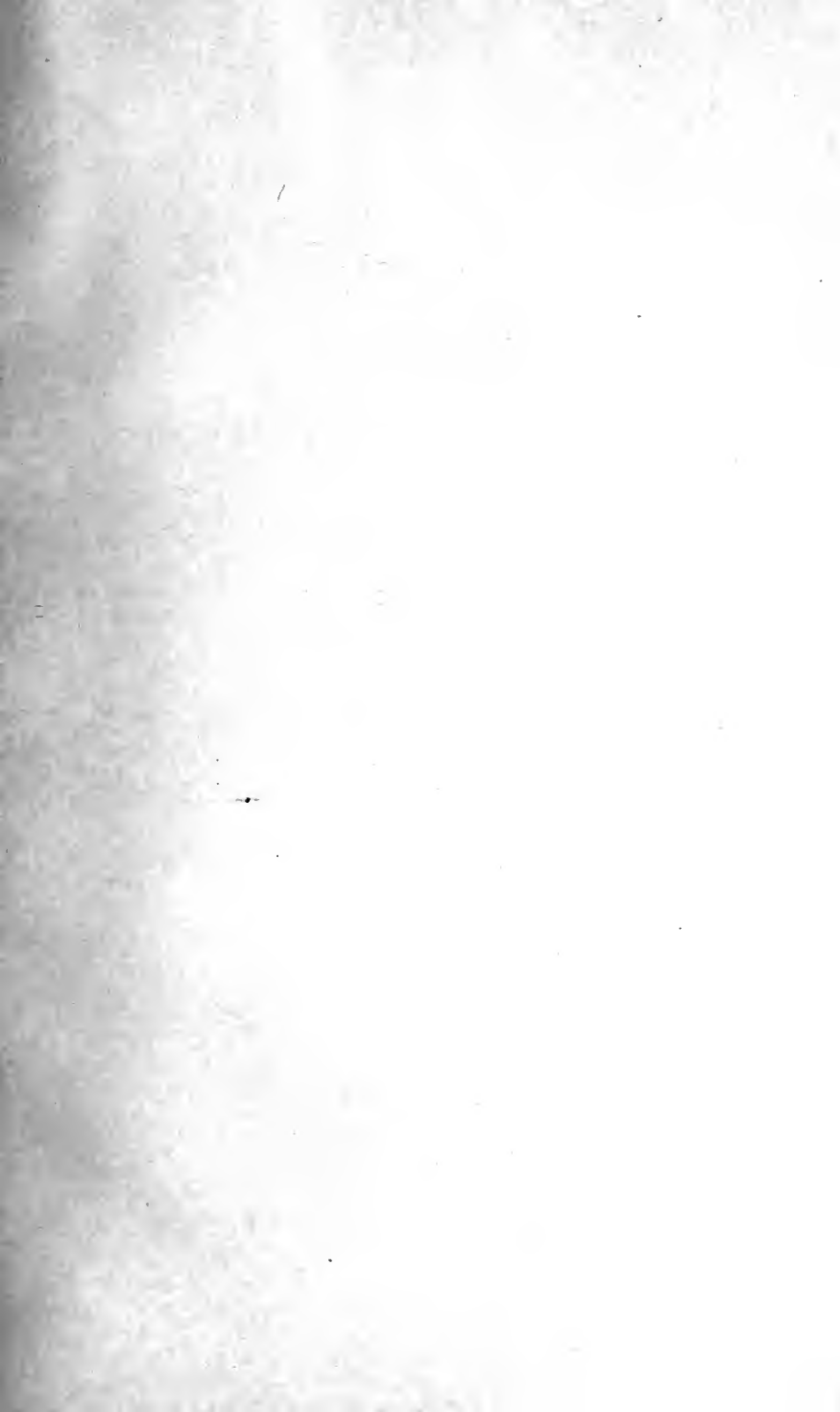
Let us consider a few points. "Plainness of speech, behavior, and apparel." This quaint testimony has an association in our minds almost of reverence. And yet care should be taken that its importance be not overestimated, and that it be not substituted for testimonies which are really vital. Plainness of speech (the "thee" and "thou" of the Friends), is indeed beautiful to hear as the language of affection, but the old practice of applying the pronoun "you" to persons of rank, as though they were individually more than one, and "thee" to persons of inferior rank—the common people—does not now exist. Plainness of speech should be understood to mean directness, simplicity, and truthfulness of

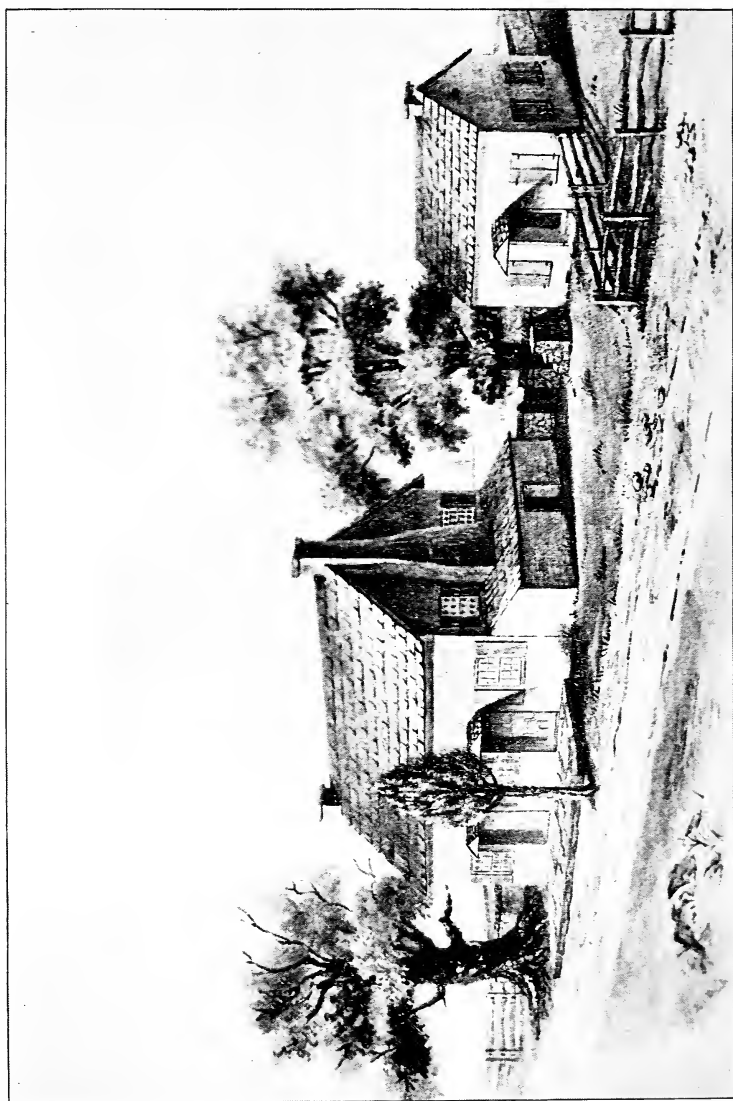
speech, not adherence to an awkward peculiarity. Plainness of behavior, unless perfectly understood and practiced in the highest sense, is even fraught with danger. It must be confessed that the charge sometimes made against Friends of a want of refinement in manner, has not been altogether unwarranted, and the charge should be respectfully considered. As a protest against rapidly changing fashions and extravagance of dress, plainness of apparel is still a valuable testimony. Yet we cannot but regard the adherence to any particular style of dress as a departure from true simplicity. All these testimonies are still valuable. But a rigid adherence to a narrow formality in regard to them is not in correspondence with the enlightenment of the age, nor with the vital spirit of true Quakerism.

The testimony against music would seem to need careful consideration. Fifty years ago almost every form of melody, vocal or instrumental, was regarded among Friends almost as a device of the evil one. To-day music in its proper place is recognized by a large portion of the Society as elevating and refining in its tendency, and is profitably used in many of our homes.

Again, some Friends still need to be reminded of the broadening and elevating influences of higher education, and in some quarters there is a want of appreciation of the benefits which undoubtedly spring therefrom and of the influence upon the future of the Society. Higher education is a necessity of the age. Will Friends avail of its beneficent influence under their own guarded care, or shall our young people be driven to seek it in other folds?

These matters are referred to not in any spirit of undue criticism, but in that of inquiry, and with a sincere desire to aid, if possible, in strengthening the weak places in our midst. But I would not dwell upon that side of the picture. On the other side there are evidences of the development of a living spirit among us, which may yet bear fruit to the renewal of our life. The First-day school work, a growth of the past twenty-five years, and the Young Friends' Associations,





VALLEY FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE, (BUILT IN 1730, OLD VIEW.)



of quite recent origin, are most encouraging evidences of Christian vitality among us. The study of the Scriptures in the true spirit of reverence and of intelligent research, as well as of the testimonies of Friends, should be most diligently commended.

Let us ever hold up before our children the cardinal testimony of our faith—the simplicity of the religion of Jesus Christ, the Inner Light, the Divine Immanence, the divinity of Christ in the soul of man. Let us impress upon them the beauty and sacredness of silent worship—the gathering together in a meeting capacity in a living silence, in the midst of which God speaks to the soul as never man spake.

Let us bear testimony to the value of a free gospel ministry. Let us cherish it as a testimony to simplicity in religious service and as a reminder of apostolic times and practices. And let us live plainly, not in the spirit of asceticism, but in prudent accordance with our several circumstances, making proper use of the comforts and refinements which the age has brought us, ever remembering our duty towards those not so well situated in outward circumstances as ourselves, and affording a proper example to others as opposed to extravagant and ostentatious living.

If we are to maintain our position and increase our influence in the world, we must continue to show our faith by our works. Friends in the past have in their quiet way led in Christian labor among mankind. The great anti-slavery movement was antedated nearly a hundred years by the quiet labors of John Woolman and Anthony Benezet. In the cause of Peace, of the Indian, of Temperance, of Prison Reform, of the equal rights of women, Friends have been among the leaders. So great, however, is the general activity in these latter days, that we are certainly no more than abreast of the Christian movements of the times towards the uplifting of the human race. To maintain and increase our vitality we must at least have our full share in the Christian movements of the age.

I believe the work of this peculiar people is *not*

ended. On the contrary, although I anticipate no considerable accession to its numbers, I believe there is still a distinct work for it in the world. This work cannot be delegated to others. It is the peculiar service of the Society of Friends. It is their mission in the world. Add to the fundamental doctrine of the Inner Light their testimonies to silent worship, to a free gospel ministry, and to simplicity of life, surely the Society has still a wondrous call to continued service in the vineyard of the Lord.

And appreciating the great heritage earned for us by the fathers and mothers of our faith, first through persecution and martyrdom, then through two hundred years of the highest Christian example to mankind, shall we not hold it ever dear and say to our children and our children's children—"This Society was founded on a rock and it endures."

## POEM.

BY FRANCIS B. GUMMERE.

They heard a voice of ruin on the wind,  
 And vengeful fingers flashed about the sky  
 Omens of terror. "From the wrath behind,  
 Save us, Jehovah!" rose our fathers' cry.

"Look, Lord, our hands are bleeding where they cling  
 Along the sharp edge of Thy mercy-seat;  
 Our heads are in the dust, and still we sing  
 Amid our choking, fallen at Thy feet!"

God rolled apart the portals of the sea,  
 And pointed down the long Atlantic wave:  
 "In yonder wilderness is peace with Me."  
 "Peace, then," they answered, "though it be a grave."

"Forth from the ruins of a broken dream,  
 Out of the shadow of memorial fear,  
 Yonder, O brother! Let the north wind scream,  
 The billows threaten, still the Light is clear.

"The Light that led against embattled priests,  
 Ranks girded only with the sword of love,  
 The Light that cheered, even when amid the beasts  
 Of Ephesus our saints and martyrs strove."

Peace in the wilderness those fathers sought,  
 Where through its vales the silent river flows;  
 Peace in the wilderness they found, and taught  
 The wilderness to blossom as the rose.

Even yet the forest, yet the dales and rills,  
 Hamlet or farmstead, all unknown to fame,  
 Breathe the old beauty of the Cambrian hills  
 And bind us with the magic of a name.

Ah, dearer still the magic and the power  
 Sprung from that simple round of birth and death!  
 Dearest of all they left us be the dower  
 Of virtue, honor, fearlessness, and faith!

Strong-souled, O fathers, bred amid the shock  
 Of falling kingdoms and our new time's throe,  
 Wearing your robe of meekness as a rock  
 That fronts the storm-winds in his fleece of snow,—

And ye, O nameless ones, that set the sail  
 In some dreamed haven God's far tryst to keep,  
 And with his light upon your faces pale,  
 Clasp a virgin hope, sank in the deep,—

Breath faith upon us ! For the dusk is falling,  
 The stars ye followed vanish from our sight ;  
 Scarcely we hear the leader's trumpet calling :  
 So leave us not amid the gathering night.

Not like some lonely fisher whom the wars  
 Of wind and flood have left without a sail,  
 What time the mist has blotted all the stars,  
 And waves are chafing to the angry gale,—

He clasps the helm, he knows not where to turn ;  
 Behind, before, the white and sibilant foam ;  
 Vain, vain for him the harbor beacons burn  
 And little voices call him to his home !

But let the light that led your hero-band  
 Shine on for us, or sun or pillar of fire,  
 Piercing the mists that veil a promised land  
 And cheat the Spirit of its last desire,—

That we may follow where a herald beam  
 Shall light the coast of faith's new hemisphere,  
 Forth from the ruins of a broken dream,  
 Out of the shadow of memorial fear.

## CLOSING EXERCISES.

AT the close of the exercises a silence fell upon those assembled, which was broken by words of prayer and thanksgiving by Matilda E. Janney. The meeting then closed, the people scattered about the grounds or returned to their homes, feeling, we trust, that it was good to have been there.

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Although the exercises under the care of the committee ended on the afternoon of Tenth month 5th, the usual First-day morning meeting was held in the old meeting-house on the following day, and was a solemn and impressive occasion.

In the afternoon a meeting appointed by the Visiting Committee of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting was held. The number present being more than the meeting-house could accommodate, the meeting was assembled in the tent used on the previous day. Testimony was borne, inciting those present to faithfulness in upholding the principles and testimonies of our Religious Society, especially our faith in the immediate revelation of the Divine Will to the children of men.

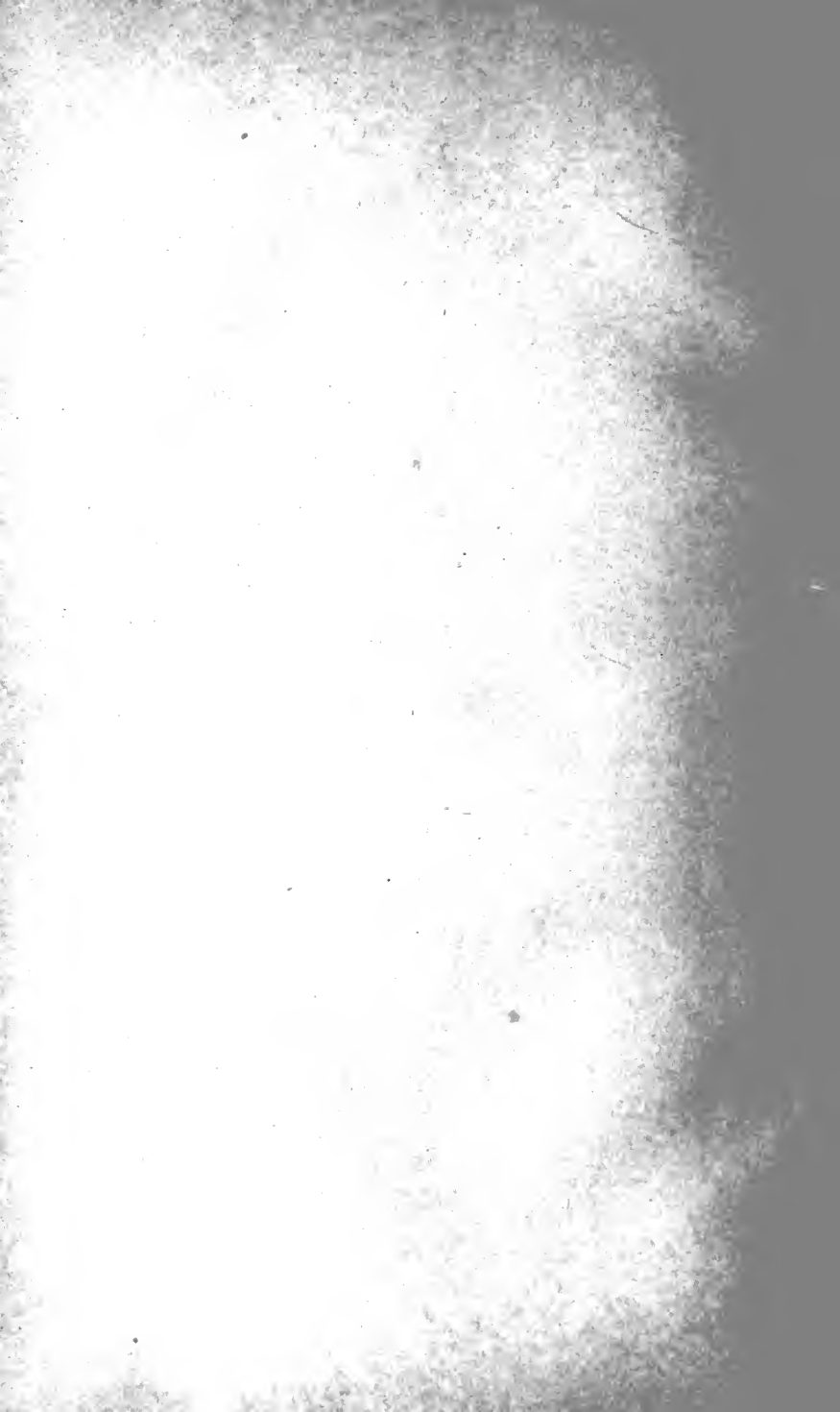




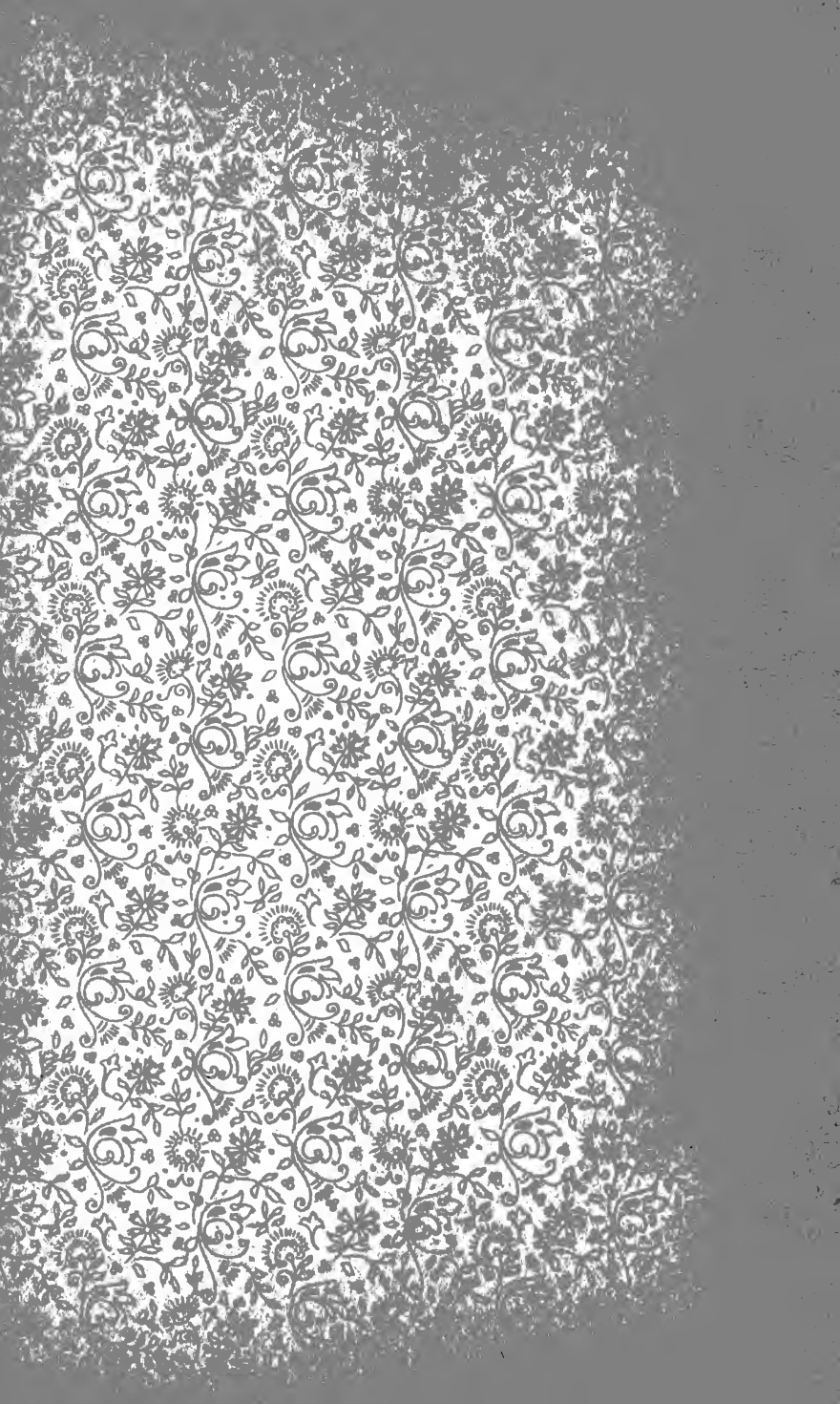


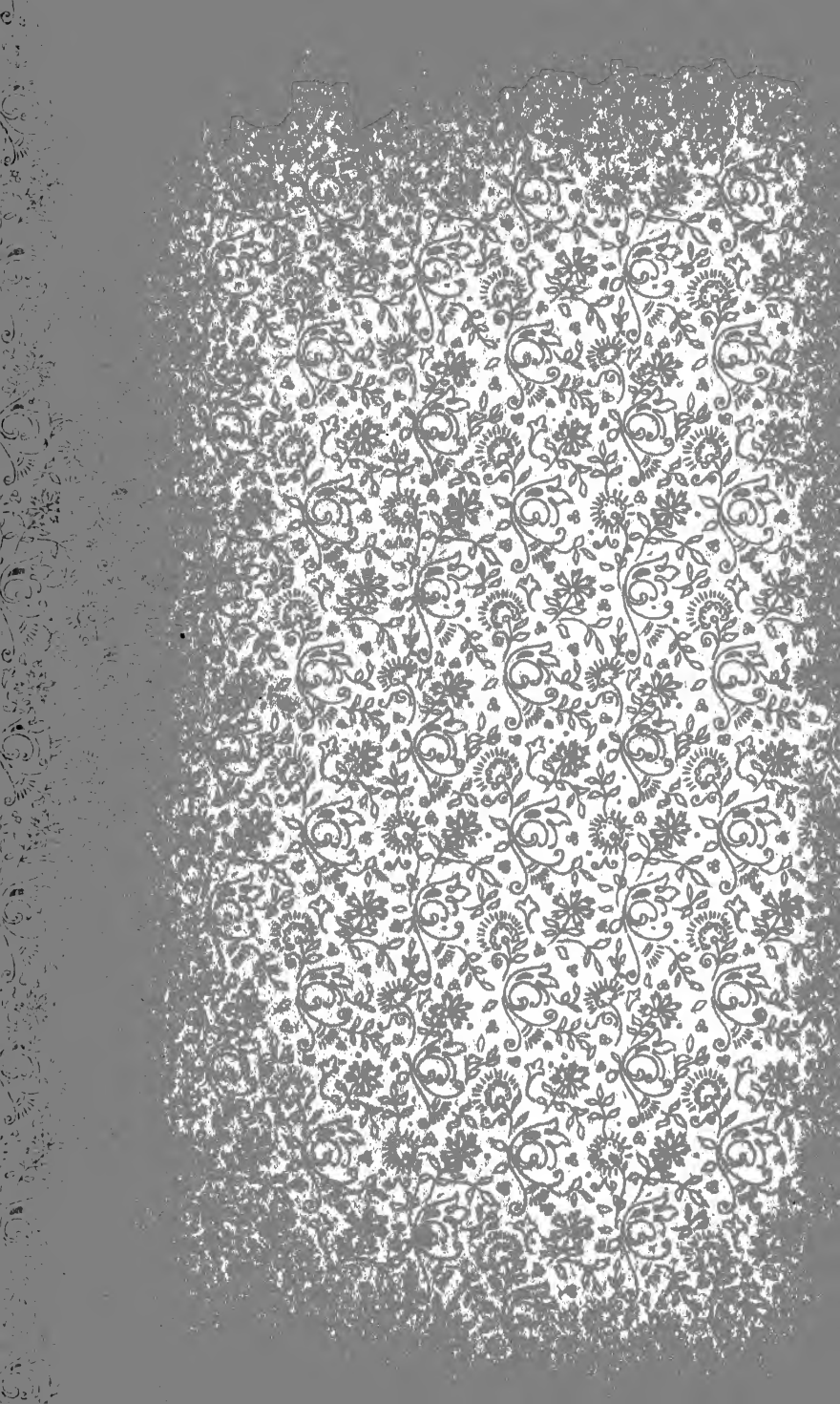












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